

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8645
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 17128

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, PGOV, ELAB, SP, GR, PO, TU, GW
SUBJECT: EC LABOR MINISTERS TO MEET INFORMALLY SEPTEMBER
21-22

REF: A) BRUSSELS 16938, B) BRUSSELS 12926

1. THE LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTERS OF THE NINE
EC COUNTRIES WILL GATHER IN FRANKFURT SEPT. 21-22 FOR
A CANDID, OFF-THE-RECORD EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, ACCORDING
TO A SOURCE IN THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' SECRETARIAT.
THE SOURCE TOLD USEC LABOR ATTACHE SEPT. 8 THAT THE
MAJOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE MEETING, HOSTED BY THE
GERMANS, ARE:

-- POTENTIAL IMPACT OF EC ENLARGEMENT ON UNEMPLOYMENT
IN THE EC NINE COUNTRIES.

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-- YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AIDS TO BE FINANCED BY THE EC SOCIAL
FUND.

-- PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT EC TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE
IN NOVEMBER.

2. THE FRANKFURT SESSION, WE WERE TOLD, WILL BE SMALLER

THAN THE SEMI-ANNUAL EC LABOR MINISTER COUNCILS, SINCE EACH MINISTER IS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY ONLY ONE OR TWO STAFFERS. MOREOVER, NOTHING WILL COME UP FOR A VOTE, BUT THE HOPE IS TO REACH A CONSENSUS ON SEVERAL PRESSING LABOR POLICY MATTERS FACING THE EC.

3. ONE OF THE AGENDA ITEMS, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AIDS, IS A HOLDOVER FROM THE JUNE 29 EC LABOR MINISTERS COUNCIL, WHERE THE FRENCH VETOED A COMMISSION PROPOSAL BECAUSE OF OBJECTIONS TO FINANCING JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (REF B). HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THE FRENCH HAVE RECENTLY SHOWN SIGNS OF BECOMING FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO PERMIT A COMPROMISE TO BE WORKED OUT AT FRANKFURT, AND A FORMAL DECISION IS TO BE MADE AT THE NEXT LABOR MINISTERS COUNCIL IN BRUSSELS ON NOV. 27.

4. EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT VREDELING, WHO HAS ALSO BEEN INVITED TO FRANKFURT, IS SCHEDULED TO REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE EC'S NEXT TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, TO BE HELD IN BRUSSELS NOV. 9. VREDELING, WE HAVE HEARD FROM TWO SOURCES, IS HOPING THAT THE CONFERENCE (ATTENDED BY EC EMPLOYERS, LABOR LEADERS, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS) WILL COME TO SOME RATHER SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS REGARDING "WORK SHARING" THROUGH A SHORTER WORK WEEK AND MORE DAYS OFF. THE OPPOSING VIEW, SHARED BY OUR SECRETARIAT SOURCE AND, ACCORDING TO HIM, BY EC VICE PRESIDENT ORTOLI, IS THAT ALTHOUGH THE CONFERENCE CAN TRY TO REACH A VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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GENERAL CONSENSUS, THE SPECIFICS MUST BE LEFT TO THE "SOCIAL PARTNERS" - I.E., TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BETWEEN LABOR AND MANAGEMENT IN EACH COUNTRY.

5. THE MOST SENSITIVE ITEM ON THE FRANKFURT AGENDA DEALS WITH THE POSITION THE EC SHOULD TAKE ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR WORKERS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH GREECE, PORTUGAL AND SPAIN (REF A). THIS SUBJECT, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, HAS NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE EC LABOR MINISTERS AS A GROUP. AT FRANKFURT, WE WERE TOLD, THE FRG WILL PRESENT THE VIEW THAT THE TREATY OF ROME'S FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT PROVISIONS WERE NOT MEANT TO BE APPLIED IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, WITH SIX MILLION UNEMPLOYED IN THE EC AND NO IMPROVEMENT IN SIGHT, AND WITH MILLIONS MORE UNEMPLOYED IN THE THREE COUNTRIES SEEKING TO JOIN THE EC. OUR SOURCE THOUGHT THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT ISSUE WOULD BE THE "MOST DIFFICULT" PROBLEM IN THE ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS, AND SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE LABOR MINISTERS WOULD BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH ANY SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO THE APPLICANT COUNTRIES. MCCARTHY

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